

USDA MILLENNIUM  
LECTURE &



DEDICATION OF THE  
HENRY A. WALLACE ROOM

## **The Life and Legacy of Henry A. Wallace**

Henry A. Wallace was born on a farm in Iowa in 1888. He became a corn scientist who realized the commercial implications of cross-breeding and started Pioneer Hi-Bred International, the world's first commercial hybrid seed corn venture. He was also a prominent agricultural economist and a long-time editor of *Wallaces' Farmer*, a leading farm publication founded by his grandfather, "Uncle Henry," the first Henry Wallace.

Named as Secretary of Agriculture in 1933 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Wallace became a powerful spokesperson for sound conservation practices, believing they should be a central part of farm policy. The high cost of soil erosion, he often said, was of more importance than the low cost of production. Wallace favored certain practices which have been referred to as organic agriculture, and lately as alternative or sustainable agriculture.

Wallace also launched the Rural Electrification Administration, the Farm Security Administration, the first food stamp plan, and dozens of other programs designed to help American farmers. His goal was to establish a viable farm economy and, at the same time, conserve the nation's natural resources. Wallace was responsible for the creation in 1938 of the "ever-normal granary," which played a critical role in supplying food to Americans during World War II, and was one of his proudest achievements.

Serving as Secretary of Agriculture until 1940, Wallace was chosen in 1941 as Roosevelt's Vice President and served in this position until 1945, when he became Secretary of Commerce. In 1948, he ran for President as the candidate of the Progressive Party. He died in 1965.

Perhaps Professor Don F. Hadwiger, in his essay "Henry A. Wallace, champion of a durable agriculture," has best summarized Wallace's vision of the world and agriculture's role in it:

*Henry A. Wallace envisioned a more enduring world, reborn from depression and war, which would fashion a more humane capitalism. Wallace stated several missions for government, especially in relation to agriculture: to help farmers gain spiritual as well as material rewards from their chosen occupation; to stabilize the agricultural economy; to provide an ever-normal granary that would keep food supplies in readiness for urgent need; to preserve the soil and other natural resources across America and throughout the world; and to increase and sustain food production worldwide in order to meet the needs of a massive human population.... Both idealist and realist, Wallace believed that farming provided a unique spiritual experience, and that rural society offered a wholesome balance within an industrial nation.*

It is this combination – idealist and realist – and the imaginative expertise it engendered in the realm of agriculture and beyond that we honor.  
(Contributed by the Henry A. Wallace Institute for Alternative Agriculture.)

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HENRY A. WALLACE ROOM

September 29, 1999, 1:30 p.m.  
Room 107-A, Jamie L. Whitten Federal Building

**Welcome**

Under Secretary I. Miley Gonzalez  
Research, Education, and Economics

**Introduction of Secretary Glickman**

Jim Stonebrink, wheat farmer  
Wallowa, Oregon

**Remarks and Introduction of Keynote Speaker**

Secretary Dan Glickman

**Keynote Speaker**

Senator George McGovern  
*Subject: "Agriculture and Technology"*

**Panel Discussion**

Moderated by Under Secretary Gonzalez

**Remarks on Henry A. Wallace and Acknowledgement  
of Wallace Family Members**

Secretary Dan Glickman

**Closing**

*Reception immediately following the conclusion of the program on the USDA Patio.  
Guests may tour the Henry A. Wallace Room during the reception.*

## **Celebrating the Millennium**

USDA is planning many activities to celebrate the millennium in the coming months. This lecture is the second in a series of Millennium Lectures that will focus on the history of the history and future agriculture and its impact on the United States and the world. Other activities will concentrate on the many of the outstanding individuals in agriculture. During the week of October 4, USDA will have a week-long celebration to honor George Washington Carver and his many contributions to agriculture. Among the events is the naming of the USDA Beltsville Office Building as the George Washington Carver Building. We are reminded today that Henry A. Wallace was influenced by Dr. Carver and his unique abilities. In 1956, Wallace stated in a speech, "Carver was patient and gentle, giving me a feeling for growing plants that has not left me to this day."

Please continue to share in the millennium celebrations at USDA. To find out more please log on at [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov).

